

Central Armature Works  
625 D Street, NW  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-611

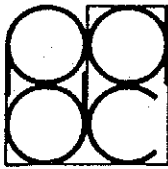
HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
350-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HABS DC-611



PENNSYLVANIA  
AVENUE  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

425 13TH STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

GENERAL CONSULTANTS

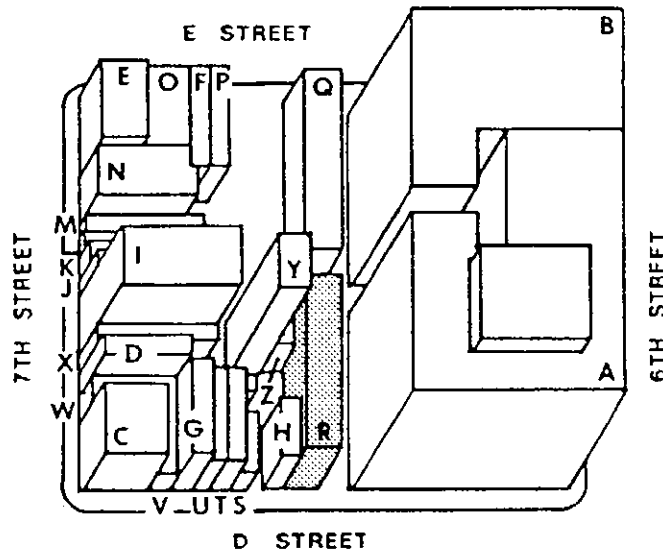
ANDERSON NOTTER/MARIANI  
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT  
DEVROUX & PURNELL  
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS  
DAVID McLAREN HART & ASSOCIATES  
PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT  
MONK DUNSTONE ASSOCIATES  
COST ESTIMATING CONSULTANT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

HABS  
DC,  
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352-

Central Armature Works  
625 D Street, NW  
Lot 851



This documentation was produced for mitigation purposes by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. Additional documentation exists for Square 457, within which this structure stands. For photographs, historical, and descriptive data on Square 457, see HABS No. DC-597.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This three-and-one-half-story industrial building was erected in 1926 for the present occupants. Centrally located on the north side of the 600 block of D Street, it completes the row of smaller and older attached brick structures to the west and faces a large modern office building across an alley to the east. Its short north facade also abuts a service drive. The forty-eight foot high building completely fills its thirty-two foot by one hundred eighty-eight foot site.

The three-bay centralized street (south) facade is of striated yellow brick, laid in running bond. Green painted windows contain steel sash on the upper floors and wooden sash at the mezzanine level. The original double height storefront treatment, with unenriched classical entablatures, projecting show windows and small-paned upper windows, remains nearly intact. The parapet is used ornamentally to emphasize the center of the facade. Projecting rowlock brick sills at the second and third floor and entablatures at the ground floor and mezzanine are continuous across the facade, creating a horizontal counterpoint to the building's verticality. A slender vertical sign projects from the center of the facade.

The twelve bays of the building's reinforced concrete frame are exposed on the east elevation. Industrial steel sash windows and common-bond red brick spandrels are treated as infill. All windows feature rowlock sills. The north elevation has two bays; a roll-up door fills the western one on the first floor. The two bays reflect the internal structural order; a single row of regularly-spaced columns bisects the length of each floor. The site drops three feet from north to south, which is accommodated by a stepped section on the first floor. The first five bays from the south have a lower floor; a mezzanine exists from the third through the fifth bay.

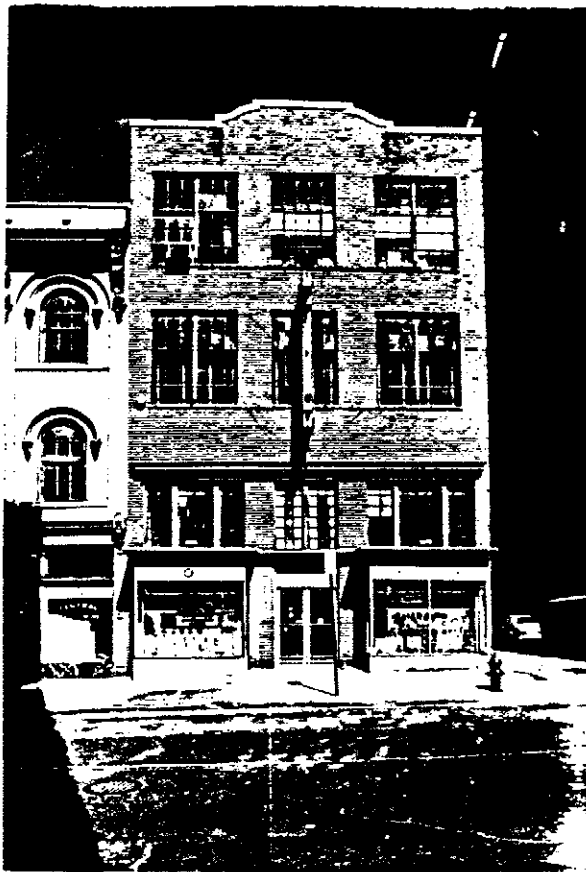
## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

This otherwise ordinary utilitarian industrial building presents a handsome, carefully composed and proportioned public facade to D Street. Its flat brick surface and small-scale, well-detailed original storefront, with its projecting bays, entablature and unusual mezzanine windows, harmonize with and enhance the traditional streetscape. It is also noteworthy that the building is well maintained and still houses the company, the Central Armature Works, for which it was built.

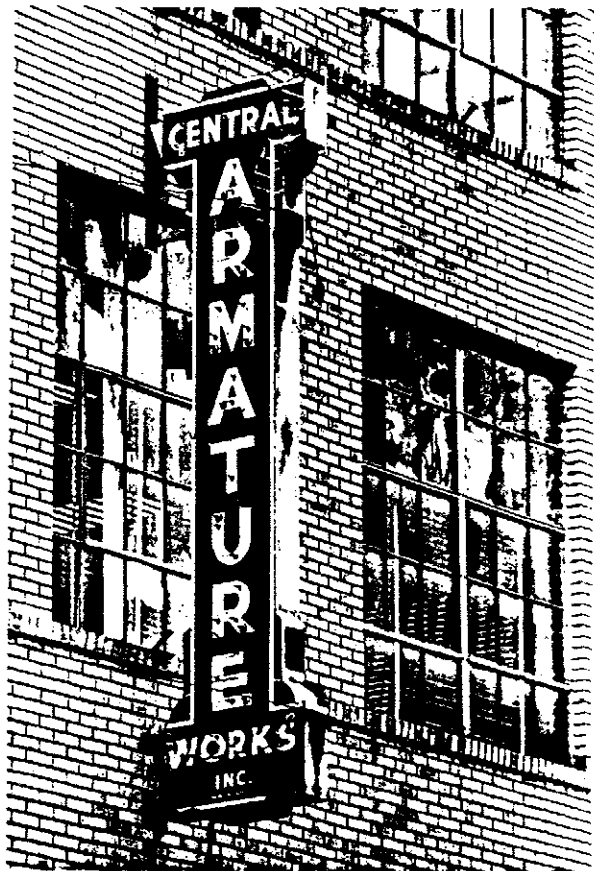
## SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Facade: The centralized, symmetrical facade, though it uses primarily ordinary materials, evokes a sense of classical order and repose. All details -- the ornamental parapet, the continuous treatment of sills and entablatures, the modulation of bay sizes, and even the vertical, centrally placed sign -- reinforce the overall balance and central focus of the composition. The flat brick plane of the upper floors relates well to those of the older buildings on the street; while the large window openings suggest the structural frame behind.

Storefront: The storefront, though an integral part of the composition, differs in scale and material from the upper portion of the facade. It is similar to other older buildings on the street which feature a concentration of detail and interest at street level. The wide side bays contain projecting plate glass show windows with slender metal frames at the corners. The bases are faced with polished granite. Ceilings of the window bays are beaded tongue-and-groove boarding. The thickness of the wall is covered at the opening into the store with white painted paneling. The upper portion of that opening is filled with a glassless row of white small-paned wood window frames. The exterior entablatures above these show windows are apparently wood (flat pieces) and pressed sheet metal (cornices). Only the cornice is carried across the narrower central bay, with its more recent aluminum and glass door. The small-paned wood windows of the upper portion of the storefront, which correspond in height to the mezzanine level that begins in the third interior bay, are fixed. This storefront is of note for the generally excellent condition of most of its original detail.



D STREET (SOUTH) FACADE



SOUTH ELEVATION: DETAIL



OBLIQUE VIEW OF  
ALLEY (EAST) ELEVATION



OBLIQUE VIEW OF ALLEY  
(EAST AND NORTH) ELEVATIONS

Lot 5  
625-629 D Street

When originally platted (1872, Bastert), Lot 5 was a slender rectangular Lot located in a low, central area of the Square. It was bordered on the east and north by narrow public alleys.

1819.....G. Bumford owned the lot. No land value was recorded.

After this date in the Tax Assessment Records the lot was subdivided into numerous properties, individually listed.

Lot 5 East (Sublot 806, 851)  
625 D Street

The eastern portion of original Lot 5 had a D Street frontage of 12.5½'. It was flanked by a narrow public alley to the east and Lot 32 to the west.

1824.....Matthias Jeffers, owner of the lot, was assessed \$227.00 for the land, and \$300.00 for improvements to the building.

1829/33

and

1844.....Jeffer's lot assessment was \$302.00. This building improvement value was \$200.00.

1855.....Prior to 1870 the D Street address was 412. Robert R. Pywell, porter, was established at this residence. Another tenant was John W. Usher, restaurant owner.

1859.....The lot's new owner was Robert R. Pywell; this lot assessment was \$1,513.00.

1870.....\$1,800.00 was Pywell's assessment for building improvements.

1878/79..The lot was still titled to Pywell. The land was valued at \$1,885.00.

1883/84..Pywell's lot value increased to \$2,259.00.

1889

to

1906.....A restaurant owned by Jacob Diemer was established at 625 D Street according to the Directories.

1893/94..The Records showed another gain in the lot value, to \$2,711.00. The improvement value was \$1,800.00. Pywell was still the owner.

1896.....Building permit #248, 8/25/1896: Rear repair of the fuel shed (14'x 14') on the back of lot; Board roof of 30' from surrounding dwellings; Put on tin roof in event that distance is not as specified. Owner: Jacob Diemer. Cost: \$25.00.



1899/

1900.....\$2,334.00 was the value of the lot and \$1,500.00 was the building improvement value. The lot was in Pywell's name.

1904.....Building Permit #1050-1/2, 11/8/1904: Remove old existing roof and put on new tin. Cost: \$10.00.

1907

to

1912.....Restaurants were situated in the building during this itme; the owners included John Driscoll and Gotthard and Kennedy.

1914.....Building Permit #4707, 5/9/1914: Remove old partitions and add new ones, new toilet and stair in rear; Make other repairs. The building was occupied as a saloon. Owner: Florence Pywell. Architect, James Bubb. Builder: Bullard, Inc., Winfield Preston.

1920.....Jacobson Brothers, wholesale grocers, were located at this address.

1924.....The Baist Plat Map indicated the lot was named No. 806.

1924

to

1926.....An upholstery store was located at 625 D Street, owned by William A. Ray.

1926.....Building Permit #3170, 9/30/1926: Permit to raze three brick buildings, two front, one rear. Owner: Central Armature Works. Builder: B. Wright.

Building Permit #4095, 10/27/1926: Build one three-story concrete factory building. Cost: \$40,000.00.

1927

to

1981.....The Central Armature Works, Inc. was listed as tenant of 625 D Street in the City Directories.

1939.....The Baist map revealed the removal of the partition wall separating 625 and 627 D Streets. The area was named No. 851.

Lot 5 Background (Sublot 851)

Bordered on the north and east by narrow alleys, the small rectangular lot was located behind lot No. 851. It was first introduced in the Tax Assessment Records in 1870.

1870.....Samuel Bacon owned the land, this building improvement value was \$600.00. No property value was recorded.

1878/79..Samuel and Peter Bacon were assessed \$369.00 for the lot.

1883/84..The owners were unchanged. The land assessment dropped to \$652.00.

1893/94..The ownership of the alley property was transferred to Thomas O. and John T. Varnell. The ground was valued at \$2172.00 while the improvement value was \$1200.00.

1899/

1900.....Thomas O. Varnell was assessed \$1629.00 for the lot, \$1200.00 for improvements to the structure.

1974.....The PADC Property Map indicated this lot had become part of Lot 851.

## SOURCES

Baist Real Estate Atlas

Bastert and Enthoffer Plat Maps

Boyd's City Directories

District of Columbia Building Permits

District of Columbia General Assessment Records

District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds

District of Columbia Surveyor's Office Records

District of Columbia Tax Records

Hopkins Real Estate Atlas

Polk's City Directories

Property Map for Downtown Urban Renewal Area for District of Columbia Redevelopment  
Land Agency

Sanborn Insurance Map

Addendum To  
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